

REMARKS

This application contains claims 1-93. Claims 2, 5, 30, 33, 36, 61, 64, 67 and 92 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17, 25, 31, 32, 34, 37, 39, 40, 56, 62, 65, 68, 70, 71 and 87 are hereby amended. Claims 1, 3-4, 6-29, 31-32, 34-35, 37-60, 62-63, 65-66, 68-91 and 93 remain in the application for consideration. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-9, 13-17, 30, 31, 36-40, 44-48, 61, 62, 67-71, 75-78, 92 and 93 were objected to for depending from rejected base claims, but were deemed to recite allowable subject matter. Applicant has therefore amended the claims as follows:

- Independent claim 1 incorporates the limitations of claim 5 and of claim 2, from which claim 5 formerly depended. Claims 2 and 5 have been canceled.
- Dependent claims 13, 15 and 17 have been amended to stand as independent claims, incorporating the limitations of claim 1 from which they formerly depended.

- Independent claim 25 incorporates the limitations of claim 30, now canceled.
- Independent claim 32 incorporates the limitations of claim 36 and of claim 33, from which claim 36 formerly depended. Claims 33 and 36 have been canceled.
- Independent claim 56 incorporates the limitations of claim 61, now canceled.
- Independent claim 63 incorporates the limitations of claim 67 and of claim 64, from which claim 67 formerly depended. Claims 64 and 67 have been canceled.
- Independent claim 87 incorporates the limitations of claim 92, now canceled.

Dependent claims 3, 6, 8, 9, 31, 34, 37, 39, 40, 62, 65, 68, 70 and 71 have been amended for proper dependence in view of the cancellation of the claims from which they formerly depended. Thus, claims 6-9, 13-17, 31, 37-40, 44-48, 62, 68-71, 75-78 and 93 are all now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-4, 10-12, 25, 29, 32-35, 41-43, 63-66 and 72-74 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Provan et al. (U.S.

Patent 6,208,955). While disagreeing with the grounds of rejection, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 25, 32, 56, 63 and 87, as noted above, in order to expedite issuance of a patent on the subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Thus, independent claims 1, 25, 32, 56, 63 and 87, as amended, are believed to be patentable over the cited art. In view of the patentability of the independent claims, dependent claims 2-4, 10-12, 29, 33-35, 41-43, 64-66 and 72-74 are also believed to be patentable. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the broader subject matter of the original claims in a continuation of this application.

Dependent claims 18-24, 26-28, 49-60 and 79-91 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Provan in view of Heger et al. (U.S. Patent 6,415,276). In view of the patentability of the amended independent claims, as explained above, these dependent claims are also believed to be patentable.

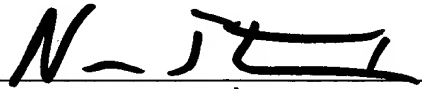
Applicant believes the amendments and remarks presented above to be fully responsive to all of the objections and grounds of rejection raised by the Examiner. In view of these amendments and remarks, all of the claims now pending in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance.

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Prompt notice to this effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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